as well as financial assistance were offered in time and programmatic interventions were provided to enable the States to protect the standing Kharif crops as well for taking up Contingency plans for growing catch crops. The multifaceted efforts of the Ministry had helped in reducing/stabilizing the Kharif losses to some extent. Early Rabi planning for capitalizing the soil moisture of late rains (September end to 1st week of October) was facilitated by the Ministry by extending expert support to States. Additional areas under boro/summer rice, wheat, pulses are planned to compensate the kharif losses to some extent. Boro-rice minikits were distributed in the potential eastern districts of Bihar, Assam and West Bengal for popularizing the boro rice varieties. Use of Truthfully Labeled (TL) seeds, and relaxation of age for seeds are allowed under the Government programmes. Additional wheat minikits of rust resistance, heat tolerant varieties, such as DBW-17 were distributed to cover additional areas under wheat for increased production. Area specific approach are adopted to achieve higher production through provisioning of inputs like fertilizers, credit, pest control measures, etc. in the areas with higher rainfall. Measures for tie-up for input supply, advance financial allocation and releases to the States for timely completion of Rabi operations are ensured through conferences and interactions with the States.

Gender Budgeting Cell

908. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has constituted a Gender Budgeting Cell (GBC) in the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation to bring gender concerns to the centre-stage in all aspects of public expenditure and policy;

(b) if so, the total amount out of budgetary allocation mandated for women farmers; and

(c) the manner in which the amount allotted to women farmers would be utilized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (PROF. K.V. THOMAS): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Out of the total Budget Estimate of Rs. 7200.00 crores, outlay earmarked for Women Component Plan (30% of the Budget estimate) is Rs. 2160.00 crores during the year 2009-10.

(c) Efforts are made to ensure use of earmarked outlay for welfare of women farmers through various components like Capacity building, Exposure visits, Demonstration etc. under the Beneficiary Oriented Schemes (BOS) of the Department of Agriculture and Cooperation. Besides this, specific segments of activities in different schemes and programs have been identified to pass on benefits directly to women farmers as far as possible.

Organic farming

909. SHRI NATUJI HALAJI THAKOR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state: